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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTO DOMINGO 006656

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SUBJECT: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: PRC REPRESENTATIVE PUSHES
RECOGNITION

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 6472

1. (SBU) During a courtesy call December 10, the head of the Santo Domingo Commercial Development Office of the People's Republic of China Cai Weiquan told Charge Kubiske that his purpose in the Dominican Republic is to encourage it to switch diplomatic recognition, recognizing Beijing instead of Taipei. PRC investment in the Dominican Republic, he acknowledged, depended on it. So, far, he said, the Dominican Government so far has given no indication that it will switch recognition; the PRC reps have been told only that authorities of the current Dominican administration are "thinking about" the proposal. Cai hoped we could help convince the Dominicans on recognition. Charge replied that this was matter between the PRC and the Dominican Republic.

2. (SBU) Cai arrived six months ago as the commercial rep and has already arranged visits by three PRC commercial/investment delegations. He has also promoted travel by Dominican politicians and businesspersons to China, including a trip by 10 Dominican senators (reftel).

3. (SBU) Cai cited two obstacles to developing a larger relationship with the Dominican Republic:

-- Lack of information among Dominicans about today's China
-- now opening up
to the world -- and about the realities of globalization and free trade; and

-- The absence of diplomatic relations, which is preventing the development of
a legal framework to facilitate trade and investment.

4. (SBU) Cai noted that trade between China and the Dominican Republic is unbalanced in favor of China. He claimed not to be an economist, nor to be current on details of investment projects cited reftel. These include negotiations by a Chinese firm to take over the Canadian mining enterprise Falconbridge including its Dominican affiliate and about other Chinese bids to purchase a 50 percent share in the Caucedo container port.

5. (SBU) The PRC commercial office in Santo Domingo has a staff of three PRC citizens and two local hires, Cai said.

6. (SBU) Comment: This conversation did not change our recent analysis (reftel) of the PRC's charm offensive here or of the Dominicans' growing but still noncommittal interest in what China has to offer. End comment.

7. (SBU) Bio data: Cai Weiquan, a career diplomat of the PRC foreign ministry, served previously in Mexico, Peru, and Ecuador. He has a master's degree in international economics and political affairs from a Mexican university and an undergraduate degree in political science in China. He speaks excellent Spanish, but claims to speak "not much English." From Fujian province, Cai now has family in Beijing.
KUBISKE